

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-7 (canceled)

8. (New) A multi-station progressive die assembly for forming laminations from an elongated strip of stock material having adjoining lamination blanks, comprising:

a plurality of die stations for progressively forming features in the lamination blanks as the elongated strip progresses through said die assembly, each of said die stations located along a center line;

at least one punch located at an initial one of said die stations for forming at least one aperture in the elongated strip between adjacent lamination blanks to provide a plurality of deformable webs between adjacent lamination blanks, two of said webs disposed respectively proximate opposite sides of the elongated strip, whereby one of said webs is stretched while another of said webs is compressed to effect alignment of the lamination blanks at successive die stations while the lamination blanks remain connected to one another.

9. (New) The die assembly of Claim 8, wherein said initial die station includes a plurality of said punches for forming a plurality of said apertures to provide said two deformable webs disposed respectively proximate the opposite sides of the elongated strip, and at least one additional deformable web disposed proximate said center line.

10. (New) The die assembly of Claim 8, wherein each of said apertures is formed as a slit, said slits extending transversely to a direction of elongation of the elongated strip.

11. (New) A method of forming laminations from an elongated strip of stock material having adjoining lamination blanks in a multi-station die assembly, said assembly having a plurality of die stations located along a center line, said method comprising the steps of:

feeding the elongated strip into the die assembly;

punching at least one aperture in the elongated strip to form a plurality of deformable webs between each pair of adjoining lamination blanks while the pair of adjoining lamination blanks are still joined, with two of the webs disposed respectively proximate opposite sides of the elongated strip,

performing further operations on the lamination blanks in subsequent stations of the die assembly to transform the lamination blanks into individual laminations, whereby one of the webs is stretched while another of the webs is compressed to effect alignment of the lamination blanks at successive die stations while the lamination blanks remain connected to one another.

12. (New) The method of Claim 11, wherein said punching step further comprises forming a plurality of apertures in the elongated strip to provide the two deformable webs disposed respectively proximate the opposite sides of the elongated strip, and at least one additional deformable web disposed proximate the center line.

13. (New) The method of Claim 11, wherein said punching step further comprises punching each of the apertures as a slit which extends transversely to a direction of elongation of the elongated strip.